

Sketch

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Part 1

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Part 1

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Abstract

I walk down a straight line Into a stone world of order. My line has direction And this is it—...

Part I

Jauvanta Young

I walk down a straight line
Into a stone world of order.
My line has direction
And this is it—

This is an earth of sterility.
The blocks of houses, chiseled clean
From straight lines and planes and angles,
Exist as pieces of property.

And they are right
As are the men who drew the lines,
Made work a thing apart from play,
And life a work,
And time a thing to catch one,
A whirlwind centrifuge
To beat fear against
And, resistless, cling to—
Unwilling yielding leaf carried on the wind
To be lost and smashed along the way—
For man is a more passive thing
And cannot hold so fast.

Time and the wind-cooled gods . . .

The blocks of houses
And the lines
Are neuter—
I am not.

The streets walk in preciseness,
Holding up their skirts to just below the knees,
And all wear signs to tell them where to go.
I never saw a street walk somewhere else.

There are churches on the corners
Wearing primly-peaked hats
Slanting dutifully to the sky.
Each dresses like unto its kind
And arches wide its Gothic jaws
To swallow up the hordes of little ordered people—

Not all, for some believe
And have not order,
And some do not believe—

Within, the petticoated men
Stand in ivory file
Grinding into sound
The Wrath and Very Word of God.
Time lays down the carpet
And folks wriggle out their faith
Or make strange movements with their mouths
Because it is to be—
And some have faith.

The men who drew the lines
Thoughtfully provided that
The words—the letters of the words—
The All-Portent Name of God—
Lie pinned on all the pages of the books
And plastered on the mouths of those
Who wriggle or who kneel.

But the wise-providers didn't say
What the Name was meant to mean,
And someone shut the doors
To let the sermon start
Before God came.

Time and the wind-cooled gods . . .

The churches and the words are neuter—
I am not.

The little squares of grass
Are hemmed across the town
By new-cut lumber slats,
Stitched into a well-kept virgin quilt—

Clean, talked-over, elbow-creasing slats.

A gallow's-tree lies white with sanctity
Within the picket fence;
And women turn their wedding rings and sigh
And yield their passive bodies
While the clocks tick slow, so slow.

And so . . .

Duty's children walk and play
And roll their hoops and shout
From whore-houses of convention.

And I?

I am a lean gray cat
And a dishrag flopped on the chair
And the smoke risen out of the marsh
To slip through their hands
And trickle down the guttering street.
I am the wind that walks through locked doors—
The creak that runs up the stair—

And those are my footprints
That stagger all over God's Heaven.

